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50-52 - EXTRAS/CB

Conflict and Instability in the Horn of Africa

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Special National Intelligence Estimate

Key Judgments

*These Key Judgments represent the views
of the Director of Central Intelligence
with the advice and assistance of the
US Intelligence Community.*

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SNIE 76-89W
March 1989
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The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of these Key Judgments:

- The Central Intelligence Agency
- The Defense Intelligence Agency
- The National Security Agency
- The Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

also participating:

- The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army
- The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy
- The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force
- The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

The National Foreign Intelligence Board concurs.

The full text of this Special National Intelligence Estimate is being published separately with regular distribution.

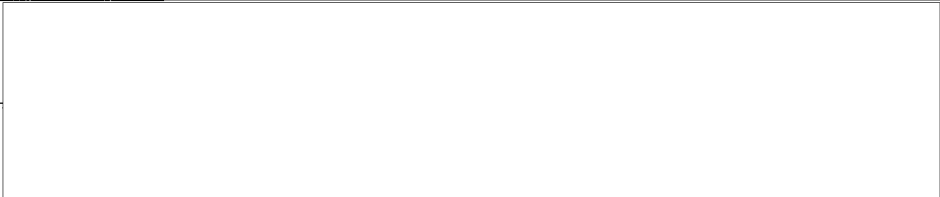
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Key Judgments

The outlook over the next year is for prolongation of warfare and instability in the Horn of Africa. Complex internal problems and historical antagonisms will defy easy solutions. Deep-rooted insurgencies, resistant to external control, will drain already desperately poor economies and contribute to:

- The likely ouster of Sudanese Prime Minister Sadiq.
- Further weakening of the Siad regime in Somalia, which has a less than even chance of surviving over the next year.
- The increasing vulnerability of Ethiopian strongman Mengistu.
- Continued humanitarian crises throughout the region from famine and displaced populations.

Even in tiny Djibouti, bolstered by a large French presence, tensions and refugees spilling over from neighboring Ethiopia and Somalia will strain internal stability and tax the economy. [REDACTED]

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Strategic Significance

The Horn's strategic importance is likely to persist or even grow despite diminution of major conflicts elsewhere in Southwest Asia. The Suez Canal/Red Sea route will remain the world's busiest chokepoint for maritime commerce. About 15 percent of the non-Communist world's tanker trade transits this route, a share that is likely to increase over the next decade as planned pipelines across Saudi Arabia are completed. [REDACTED]

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Formal US military access in the Horn—limited to Somalia—figures prominently in US military contingency planning for Southwest Asia but is jeopardized by insurgency and Somali Government dissatisfaction with declining US aid levels. US-Somali relations will remain rocky, and Siad or a successor may decline to renew the 1980 US access accord when it becomes subject to review next year. The nearest viable alternative would be the distant port of Mombasa, Kenya, given Djiboutian and French reluctance to increase the level of informal US military access in Djibouti. [REDACTED]

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New Soviet Approach

Moscow is rethinking the cost and extent of its commitment to Ethiopia in light of the intractable northern wars and its general desire to seek political solutions to Third World conflicts. Although Gorbachev will not abandon his loyal but difficult ally, economic restructuring at home and improved East-West relations have become higher priorities for Moscow, and its aid to Ethiopia is likely to decline. The Soviets also will continue to express

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interest in a cooperative effort with the United States to promote regional peace. Mengistu will not cease his effort to secure a military victory, however, even if the Soviets press him to make concessions. Moreover, although at Moscow's urging Mengistu has signaled his desire for better US relations, he distrusts the West and will not abandon economic and human rights policies that stand in the way of improvement. [REDACTED]

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Third-Party Complications

Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union can dictate events in the region. They find themselves in the uneasy positions of trying to press for peaceful solutions while their clients press back for more military help to attain their own objectives. Dissatisfied with their patrons' largess, countries of the Horn will continue to look elsewhere to such secondary powers as Libya, North Korea, Cuba, and Israel, and to neighboring Arab and African countries. These external players will exacerbate the conflicts without being able to resolve them, however. [REDACTED]

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Qadhafi has taken advantage of the strain in US relations with Somalia and Sudan to increase Libya's role in the Horn principally through military aid and concessional oil. Tripoli seeks the elimination of the Western—particularly US—presence. Libya, however, is unlikely to become a dominant power in the Horn because Qadhafi is distrusted and there are distinct limits on Libyan capabilities to become involved militarily. [REDACTED]

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Peace Prospects

There is little chance that the insurgencies in Sudan, Somalia, or Ethiopia can be militarily defeated. The best chance for eventual peace, albeit low, lies in regime changes. War weariness and exposure of humiliating military weaknesses have in varying degrees heightened prospects that senior officers will seize power and seek accommodation with the rebels. [REDACTED]

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A government run by senior officers in Sudan—or a new civilian regime installed by the military—would almost certainly be pro-Western and cooperative with the United States. The orientation of any junta in Somalia or Ethiopia would be considerably less certain, however. Moreover, in either of these countries, a coup attempt would risk a period of bloody chaos. New regimes in the Horn, even if they quickly consolidated power and reached accommodation with rebels, still would face vexing economic problems and would variously look to the West for arms and development aid and humanitarian assistance. [REDACTED]

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Economic Decline and Humanitarian Crises

The world's poorest region, the Horn will remain subject to mass famine from natural disasters such as drought, floods, and pestilence as well as from manmade causes such as war and wrongheaded economic policies.

Prospects for economic improvement are grim:

- Ethiopia under Mengistu almost certainly will press on with disastrous Stalinist policies, despite tactical shifts to attract Western aid.
- The current regimes in Sudan and Somalia, distracted by internal wars, are unlikely to follow through on far-reaching reforms to reverse economic decline.
- Military coups would not necessarily bring to power regimes inclined to pursue effective free market policies, although they might be more willing than the current regimes to take Western advice on economic matters.

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